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INT	LAB	TAR	FROM : AmEmbassy GUATEMALA		DATE: November 24, 1978	
TR	XMB	AIR	SUBJECT: Monthly Report on Violence and Human Rights:			
ARMY	CIA	NAVY	REF :			
OSD	USIA	NSA	BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.			
POL 3			SUMMARY. During September there were 24 deaths probably inspired by, political motives. In addition, the press reported five probably "death squad" executions. A number of violent events in September, including the assassination of the Nicaraguan Ambassador, were acts showing sympathy for the FSLN guerrillas. (See Guatemala 5564 and 5770.) The bus problem continued to fester, building up to the October denouement. Duralite (asbestos) workers took over the Swiss Embassy for a time but an agreement was finally worked out with the Ambassador, Minister of Labor, workers and the company. Embassy employees were not harmed and the workers withdrew under guarantees as police looked on (Guatemala 5770). END SUMMARY.			
AMB			GOVERNMENT-RELATED VIOLENCE. A labor union leader, Jose Valerio RAMIREZ, at a meat processing plant near Escuintla was shot and killed. Police arrested an aide to a <u>comisionado militar</u> and a companion. Ramirez' family requested speedy action by the Court, but the outcome of such cases is generally not reported by the press. No evidence has been published establishing guilt or innocence of the two suspects.			
DCM			The San Carlos University student organization (AEU) denounced the disappearance of campesinos Gabriel MELGAR Castro and Miguel Angel REYES Lopez, both now missing for 43 days. Witnesses from the Petén claim the two campesinos were taken away by units from the military base at Poptún. Both police and military deny knowledge of the campesinos' whereabouts.			
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The National Labor Central (CNT) and villagers near Los Amates, Izabal, alleged that on September 4 elements from the National Police and the Mobile Military Police (PMA) picked up 11 campesinos who have since failed to turn up at the jail in Puerto Barrios. Moreover, the lawyer advising the campesinos, Luis BARRERA Castillo, has been threatened with death, according to the villagers. They blame local landowners as being behind these acts of intimidation.

Four university students captured in Quezaltenango for distributing allegedly subversive leaflets, according to the press, were released at the order of President LUCAS who was attending a fair there. Student leaders claim the leaflets related only to the demonstration authorized for September 13.

Christian Democratic Party (DCG) leader Vinicio CEREZO denounced the kidnapping of the party secretary general for the village of Cayuga in the municipality of Los Amates, Izabal, and expressed the view that the action appears directed against the party and involves the detective corps of the National Police. Treasury police, he said, had "similarly" attacked the party secretary in Costa Cuca.

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GUERRILLA-RELATED VIOLENCE. On September 16, the Nicaraguan Ambassador was shot down and died two weeks later. The EGP claimed credit, stating that the killing demonstrated their solidarity with the Nicaraguan FSLN (Sandinista) guerrillas.

On September 28 a bomb exploded in the downtown office of LANICA, the Nicaraguan airline, causing damage but no personal injuries. Two days later the press received a phone call stating that the bombing was carried out by the FAR as an act of "solidarity" with the FSLN.

Around midnight on September 28, unknown persons attacked the military offices of the Central American Defense Council with machine-gun and fire bombs. Soldiers guarding the building believed they wounded one of the attackers. The attack caused little damage. The next day a bulletin from the Military Command of the Guatemalan Communist Party (PGT) claimed responsibility for the act which was intended to show solidarity with the FSLN.

According to the Mexican journal Uno Mas Uno, Guatemalan guerrillas have been attacking oil fields in Chiapas and Mexican military units have been called in to protect workers and installations. General Jose HERNANDEZ

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Toledo, in charge of the Chiapas military zone, is quoted as saying Mexican forces have engaged Guatemalan guerrillas several times, but that there have been no casualties.

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OTHER VIOLENCE. In addition to five probable death squad "executions" 24 other persons were killed in September. Of these, three were identified as campesinos (the wife and child of one were wounded), one was an Army Reserve lieutenant on duty at the Quezaltenango Base, another was an informant for the Mobile Military Police (PMA), and there were a businessman, a farmer, a teacher, and two escaped Salvadorans who had been arrested in connection with an anti-terrorist conspiracy. The government denied having anything to do with their deaths. A woman labor leader, Maria Eugenia MENDOZA v. de Aguirre, who replaced the late Rolando MUJIA (Guatemala 4367) as advisor to workers at Santa Agape and Corral Chiquito in Huehuetenango was kidnapped, beaten and hospitalized. The latest word is that she had to give up her post and return to Guatemala City for her own safety.

During September, bus drivers struck for a week, tempers rose, and police intervened occasionally, arresting drivers who tried to damage buses or drive them on to the University of San Carlos campus. Drivers mistakenly believed the campus provided "sanctuary." Student and union leaders broke over this issue; but eventually buses were withdrawn by drivers and the strike was momentarily settled when drivers were authorized a pay increase by a minimum price commission set up by the Ministry of Labor. Subsequently when the agreement broke down, the government took over supervision of the buses and police were required to intervene to protect drivers and to keep owners from taking buses out of town to hide them in the jungle. The month ended with the issue unresolved and with citizenry growing weary over the various arguments and little or no bus service.

At the end of September, Duralite (asbestos) factory workers took over the Swiss Embassy and demanded that the Ambassador intercede with the parent Swiss firm to resolve their demands. The police surrounded the building but did not intervene as the Ambassador and his staff worked to resolve the issue. On October 2, the matter was resolved and the Duralite employees returned to their jobs under guarantees worked out between the Minister of Labor on behalf of the government and the Ambassador on behalf of the company. Swiss Embassy employees, though frightened by their experience, said they had not been harmed by the workers who were armed with metal rods. They had no guns.

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HUMAN RIGHTS ATMOSPHERICS. During September, Dr. David Scott Palmer, FSI Director of Latin American Area Studies, visited Guatemala and addressed audiences of the American Chamber of Commerce and the Landivar University Institute of Political and Social Studies on human rights. Minister of Government Donaldo ALVAREZ was named by President Lucas to represent Guatemala at a human rights conference in Geneva (Guatemala 5195).

STATISTICS. Of the 24 politically-related deaths, 11 were in the Oriente, 10 were in the Indian highlands, and 3 were in Guatemala City. Two of the five "death squad" deaths were in the Oriente, 2 in the Indian highlands, and one in the Pacific lowlands.

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